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AUTHOR	Parker, Glenn M.; O'Connor, William
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ABSTRACT

This paper reports a trial program in laboratory training with a focus on racism which was conducted in a suburban school system in the fall of 1968. The voluntary enrollment in-service program was instituted for professional personnel, community residents, and school board members in response to their hesitancy in discussing race relations openly or objectively. The staff was ethnically mixed, with varying degrees of educational background and work experience. They were chosen not only for their training competence but also for their ability to relate to a diverse participant group. The basic learning technique was the T-group. Following the first session, the participants were divided into three groups which remained intact for the full four days. The groups generally included about ten people. Some attempt was made to mix the groups according to race, sex, age, and classification. Two trainers were assigned per group. The basic evaluation instrument was a written reaction form completed by the participants following the training. (JM)

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RACISM IN SCHOOLS: A Response Utilizing Laboratory Training

By: Glenn M. Parker and William O'Connor

Both before and since the Kerner Report a variety of efforts to root out racism in schools has been suggested. Hire more black teachers! Change the curriculum! Change the textbooks! Add black history courses! Community control! And so the list goes. Many of these changes have been implemented and with some success.

Training has also been suggested, especially as a means of sensitizing teachers to the needs of minority group children. Much of the emphasis has been on urban schools with heavy concentrations of minority group children. Little attention, however, has been given to suburban school districts and yet, the need, it can be argued, is equally as great.* This paper reports on an experiment in laboratory training with a focus on racism which was conducted in a suburban school system.

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*See e.g., Thomas Cottle, "Strategy for Change," Saturday Review (September 20, 1969) for a report on another program in a suburban district. On the general subject of training and systems for change in schools, see two books edited by Goodwin Watson: Concepts for Social Change and Change in School Systems (Washington, D. C.: National Training Laboratories, National Education Association, 1967).

Glenn M. Parker is Director, New Jersey Community Action Training Institute, Trenton, New Jersey and Dr. William O'Connor is Superintendent of Schools, Lawrence Township, New Jersey.

The New Jersey Community Action Training Institute (CATI) has been in existance since 1965. Under a grant from the Office of Economic Opportunity (OLO), CATI is responsible for the development and delivery of training for a selected number of community action agencies throughout New Jersey and New York. CATI also provides training and technical assistance to OLO regions across the country with funds from a second grant.

In addition, the Institute provides training for other groups and organizations on an individual contract basis. The Lawrence Township program described in this booklet is an example of the kinds of contract programs within CATI's realm of capabilities.

Other programs recently conducted include a series of workshops in cooperation with the Heritage Foundation, Inc. in northern New Jersey. The workshops are designed to familiarize the participants with the history and cultural backgrounds of minority groups in order that the participants will be better prepared to become active agents of social change. The Institute is also conducting training for the staffs and boards of Model Cities programs. Other training capabilities include mass media, management and supervisory skills training, human relations workshops, new careers and "train-the-trainers" programs.

For further information, please contact:

Glenn M. Parker, Director
N.J. Community Action Training Institute
P.O. Box 4078
Trenton, New Jersey 08610

(609)888-4200

BACKGROUND

The community of Lawrence Township, New Jersey is in the process of significant change. It has 20,000 residents with a school enrollment of 3,700 public school pupils. Blacks comprise 12 percent of the total population. It is somewhat above the average wealth of most New Jersey School Districts with a per pupil assessment in excess of $39,000. Lawrence Township's student enrollment has averaged a 5% increase each year and its new high school is full with 1,050 students. A new middle school is under construction. It will relieve the capacity enrollments throughout the schools for a five to seven year period if the growth rate does not increase.

Since the community had been predominately rural, the frictions between old residents and "newcomers" are still visible in Board referendums and school board elections. The larger number of college educated and school-oriented recent residents seems to have outweighed the voters from the less upwardmobile sections of the township and school budgets have continued to pass by relatively narrow margins. The community enjoys an enviable reputation in the Delaware Valley for having one of the more forward-looking school systems. Relatively little overt racial friction, vandalism or disruption had been publicized in the area newspapers.

However, in the spring of 1968 a group of Black parents came to the Lawrence Board of Education and presented 28 allegations of discrimination which had occurred in the high

school. The school board listened to the charges and suggested that the Superintendent look into them. His findings were few. One surprising characteristic, however, was that school personnel were hesitant to discuss the subject of race relations openly, or objectively.

In reviewing the matter, the Board of Education decided to form a Human Relations Committee. The twelve-member committee included six Black and six White residents. The committee was charged with reviewing incidents of a racial nature and bringing these concerns to the Board of Education before greater frictions developed. Suggestions for in-service training and curriculum revisions were also sought from the advisory group.

The Human Relations Committee met for four months and recommended that an in-service training program focusing on racism be provided for all professional personnel in the school district. Many inquiries were made to nearby colleges, agencies and training laboratories to determine costs, time requirements, needs and method of proceeding. The New Jersey Community Action Training Institute (CATI) of Trenton, New Jersey, was one of the agencies contacted. After meeting with the Board, it was agreed that residential laboratory training would be desirable and that CATI would conduct the program.

A steering committee was immediately formed from among the school personnel including administrators, department

chairmen, board members, teachers and interested residents.

In the fall of 1968, CATI representatives and the steering committee agreed that four laboratories would be held and that board members and parents, in addition to school faculty, would be invited. Attendance would be on a "first-come-first-served" basis, and since it involved meeting on Saturday and Sunday as well as during teaching days, no school personnel would be "pressed" to attend.

The program began on Wednesday evening and ran through Sunday afternoon. This meant, in effect, that the school system "gave up" two days of class time (Thursday and Friday) while the participants "gave up" two days of free time (Saturday and Sunday).*

In the first seminar, priority was given to board members, administrators, department chairmen, teachers, and interested parents who had worked closely with the schools on a P.T.A. or advisory committee basis. It was also decided that the number for any one session would be limited to approximately thirty participants.

The training agency, CATI, is a non-profit corporation organized in 1965 and funded primarily by the Office of Economic Opportunity to provide training for people working in the war against poverty. While this was CATI's first school system project, it had been conducting laboratory

*This also meant that the school system had to pay substitutes to cover the classes of the teacher-participants.

training as part of its total program effort. Racism is also very much a part of its work since the staff and board is multi-ethnic with backgrounds in civil rights and community work. The staff assigned to the Lawrence project was ethnically mixed with varying degrees of educational background and work experience. They were chosen not only for their training competence, but for their ability to relate to a diverse participant group which would contain professional school personnel as well as board members and community residents.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In preparation for the program, an extensive needs assessment process was conducted by the Institute staff with the assistance of an outside consultant. The consultant, a Ph.D. in education and widely respected in New Jersey education, was thoroughly grounded in the principles of laboratory training. He also provided entry credentials as an "educator."

The assessment process included a series of visits to each school to get a reading on the "climate" of the system. As trainer observers, the staff was able to accumulate a considerable amount of valuable, although intangible, data for the design of the program. The central purpose of the visits, however, was to conduct both group and individual interviews with potential participants.

During the interviews, the purpose of the program was briefly explained and the participants were asked to discuss areas of concern or needed skill improvement to which the training might be addressed.

By far, the major concern expressed at these meetings was race and race relations. It is probably true that recent community reactions to the so-called racial incidents in the system and the attendent publicity as well as the school disturbances in the nearby city of Trenton all contributed to bringing the subject to the consciousness of the participants. The problem was, nevertheless, there and

was expressed in a variety of ways:

--is separatism necessary in the search for a Black identity?

--what daily things in the life of a Black child enhance his self-esteem?

--why have the parents of the Black children turned us off?

--how do you deal with Black boys if there are no Black male teachers in the school?

Other needs were also cited:

--how can we succeed with problem pupils -- Black or White -- if their parents don't care about them?

--how can we achieve more parental involvement and support in the work of the schools?

GOALS

The staff believed firmly that the participants tended to view the problems on an intellectual rather than a feeling level. Thus, sources of problems were seen as "out there" -- the Black child, parents, textbooks, society.

Therefore, it was decided that a necessary concomitant to the focus on racism was an emphasis on some of the more usual objectives of laboratory training. Accordingly, it was determined that the goals of the program would be to help the participants:

1. become more aware of their own behavior and its impact on others.

2. understand the dynamics of group action; their role and the role of others in a group.

3. learn how to learn from their own experience.

4. increase their interpersonal skills -- relating to other individuals and working with others in groups.

The more specific goals related to racism were:

1. become more aware of their own racist attitudes.

2. understand the impact of their racist attitudes on others.

3. change their attitudes toward Blacks and other minority groups.

4. increase their interpersonal skills in relating to Blacks and other minority groups.

ORIENTATION

Prior to each laboratory, an orientation session for the participants was held in the community. The staff briefly outlined the nature of the program, logistics and scheduling details. Participants were given an opportunity to ask specific questions. It was generally agreed that the orientation was poor. Further discussion of the orientation follows in a later section of the paper.

TRAINING SITE

The program was held in a residential retreat setting. A motel at the New Jersey shore offering off-season, low rates was used. Since it was off-season, there were minimal distractions or enticements outside the motel, although the boardwalk

and beach were useful for exercise and contemplation between sessions. In one instance, trainers utilized the beach as a setting for a combined break and non-verbal communications exercise.

OPENING SESSION

After dinner on Wednesday evening, the total group met for an orientation. The staff was introduced and a brief description of the program was outlined. It was explained that for most of the weekend the training would take place in three small groups (T-Groups), but that at various times, including the final session, they would meet as a total group to share learnings and receive input from the staff.

Either verbally or in writing, or both, participants then discussed why they came to the program and set individual goals for the weekend. The opening session concluded with some form of introductory or warm-up exercise which could be accomplished with a large group.

One such typical exercise is the social barometer. The barometer is a scale which is placed on the wall and which begins with "-100" at one end and runs through "+100" at the other end. Several participants are asked to stand at "0" and then move to various points on the scale which reflected their feelings about certain issues or concepts. The issues are called out by the other members of the training group. After about three minutes, several other participants take

their place until everyone has been involved. The exercise provided useful data for analysis in the T-groups, not only on attitudes toward a variety of issues but also on feelings toward taking a "public" position on sometimes controversial and often personal areas. For example, a young black participant with an afro hair style was questioned as to why she did not take more positive (i.e. militant) positions on such issues as black power, black teacher organizations, etc. The resulting discussion produced some extremely useful learnings on perceptions and stereotyping.

T-GROUPS

The basic learning vehicle was the T-group. Following the first session the total group was divided into three groups which remained intact for the full four days. The groups generally included about ten people. Some attempt was made to mix the groups according to race, sex, age and classification (teacher, board member, etc.).* Two trainers were assigned to each group.

It is impossible to describe what happened in the T-groups since each group had a life of its own. The groups generally began either by picking up data from the opening session or by creating a new agenda based on more immediate concerns of

*The importance of mixing became clear during the second seminar when the only black person in one of the groups was the trainer. He was, as a result, forced at various points to move into the role of a participant.

the participants. Since race is a very sensitive subject, the first day usually moved very slowly with a strong tendency to discuss problems from the "there-and-then" world. This provided an opportunity for the trainers to make norm-setting interventions on such things as "here-and-now" focus, criteria for useful feedback, etc.

It should be noted that the process of learning how to learn was perhaps more difficult for a school system. Many participants consider themselves experts on learning theory and, more importantly, are conditioned to a "teacher-tell" style of learning. Some firmly believe that one learns about racism from a lecture on racism.

Accordingly, trainer interventions were more frequent than is usual in T-Groups and often there was a need for focused exercises to move the group toward the objectives. Such exercises included the flower grid, trust walk, and several non-verbal techniques. In some cases the trainers had to take more direct roles when confrontation was necessary and at other times to leave the room as a device for forcing the group to assume responsibility.

In general, after the first day, the T-Groups became an extremely intense experience. The norms had been set and the trust level increased to the point where risk-taking was possible. Learning was, nevertheless, difficult since racial attitudes and racist behaviors are deep-rooted and resistent to change. Additionally, for many participants, association

with Black people had been sporadic and sometimes virtually non-existent. Therefore, hearing that a particular attitude or behavior was perceived as racist was often painful.

However, it was at that point possible to identify the problems and further to fix their locus as being "here" and not "out there." This made the process of moving to deal with new attitudes, behaviors and skill competence less difficult.

No attempt was made to assure similarity among the three groups. The trainers were given a free hand to determine the operation of their groups, although there were meetings of the staff during the day to compare notes and give assistance where needed. These meetings were also used to discuss the timing and content of total group sessions. The total group sessions were not pre-scheduled, rather they were set by the staff as the need was determined during the program.

The scheduling of the T-Groups was flexible except that meal breaks were determined by the dining room schedule of the motel. Each group was free to make its own schedule. Thus, some groups decided to meet after dinner and often went until early in the morning. At other times, a group might decide to extend the lunch break to include a walk on the beach.

THEORY AND GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING SESSIONS

At several points during the weekend, the total group was reconvened. The purpose of the sessions varied according to the needs of the group. They were often scheduled after lunch or dinner to lighten the tension of the T-Groups. In addition to providing a needed safety valve for the T-Groups, these sessions were used to share learnings or bring problems to the attention of the total group for analysis. It was often an opportunity for the staff to make theory or informational inputs on group behavior or the psychology of racism.

In one session, a problem generated in one group was roleplayed by several participants and analyzed by the total group. In another session, after a good deal of problem analysis, the group was given a problem solving exercise which focused on racism in the school system.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Most of the other activities were of an informal nature. On several occasions films, such as the NET special, "Where is Prejudice" were shown and discussed. The staff was also available in the evenings to discuss broader conceptual questions of concern to the participants such as Black student demands for separate facilities and programs, recent episodes of violence in cities and on campuses and related issues. Discussions were also held on the theory and application of

laboratory training. Some individual consultation with participants also took place in the evening.

Perhaps most important were the informal contacts among the participants. These discussions ranged from a follow-up on issues raised in the T-Groups to a sharing of learnings among participants from different T-Groups as well as how the learnings could be applied "back home." Since there was little activity outside the motel during the off-season, participants tended to stay around in the evening. The resulting bull sessions in the rooms were extremely useful.

MATERIALS

Each participant was given a kit of reading materials for study following the weekend. The kit included various pieces on racism and education, such as Kozol's, "Death at An Early Age", a long review of "Pygmalion in the Classroom" by Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobsen from Psychology Today and "The Student as Nigger" by Gerald Farber. The latter article, which contains a good deal of profane language, was removed after opponents of the program used it as a basis for attacking the training.

The materials were not used during the training. However, it provided a good starting point for many of the participants who wanted to re-educate themselves immediately upon their return.

EVALUATION

The problems of evaluating training are legion and have been well documented. Although considerable attention has been given to evaluation design in recent years, it remains at a somewhat primitive level of sophistication. The problem is magnified when it is laboratory training that is being evaluated. As Schein and Bennis point out, there is little hard evidence on the results of laboratories ". . .largely because of the fantastic difficulties of doing valid evaluation research."*

The basic evaluation instrument in this program was a written reaction form completed by the participants following the training. Additional data was collected by the trainers who made visits to the schools following each seminar to observe classes and talk with participants.

About two to three weeks following each seminar a meeting was held with the participants. At the meeting there was an informal discussion of "happenings" since the training and the reaction form was completed. It was believed that the form should not be completed at the end of the weekend, as is usually the case, but after participants had some time to test their learnings in the real world. This, it is assumed, increased the validity of the results.

*Edgar H. Schein and Warren G. Bennis, Personal and Organizational Change Through Group Methods (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1965), p. 237.

The evaluation instrument included eight open-ended questions:

1. What is the singular most important result of participating in the program? (either positive or negative)

2. In specific terms, how has the program effected your performance in the classroom?

3. In specific terms, how has the program effected the relationship you maintain with your co-workers and supervisors?

4. Has there been any difference in the way you view your students or the way they view you?

5. What effect has the program had on the non-participants?

6. Do you feel that participation in the program should be mandatory? If yes, please explain.

7. Can you offer suggestions for improving the program? (consider the entire process from preliminary orientation to follow-up)

8. What positive and/or negative feelings do you have specifically in regard to the residence aspect of the program?

RESULTS

There were 97 participants in the program. All but five reacted favorably to the training. Their main objections were concerned with the confrontation techniques which they saw as harsh and unnecessary and the use of profane language which they claimed was excessive. A summary of responses to the eight questions on the evaluation instrument follows:

1. Most important result: Although it is difficult to summarize responses to this question since they were so personalized,

a majority of the participants saw the most important result of the program to be a greater awareness of their behavior and attitudes and its impact on others.

--It has made me more aware of or sensitive to others' feelings and how I may affect them without meaning to.

--Understanding one's own behavior and the way people react to it will bring people closer together and more human in their thinking. One learns that it is never too late to learn, create and to change attitudes.

The next most frequent response dealt with a change in the way they relate to others.

--an increase in the whole viewing of my motives and an improvement in the way I relate to my students and co-workers. I listen better when the children are talking.

--a change in how I respond to individuals not only adults, but children. Instead of telling I listen, accept their response, give choices, etc., do not make decisions.

--I feel a greater eagerness to meet my students and co-workers. I am enjoying both more and am able to hold more meaningful conversations with them. I found that the students and I have more to talk about, laugh about and cooperate about.

A few participants specifically pointed to a change in their attitudes toward minority groups.

--I realized that I really did have many prejudices that I did not realize I had. I also feel I am more concerned about people as individuals, than as just belonging to a group.

2. Impact on classroom performance: For those participants who were classroom teachers, there was an almost universal increase in concern for the student -- his feelings and reactions and, in general, a more participatory attitude. A few specifically mentioned an increased concern and competency in the area of race.

> --there is a very great sense of freedom but responsible behavior. I am not in charge of the children, they are in charge of themselves. I work in small group instruction. Also, I've been striving for this kind of reaction from children for seven years -- the experience I encountered at the training institute showed me why it hadn't happened yet -- I didn't let it happen -- and now it is -- thank you!

> --I believe I have been more understanding. I also believe I'm more aware of students' personal problems. I have made a more concerted effort to seek text books depicting black students and black figures in positions of authority.

> --I actually listen to children and not let what they say go in one ear and out the other. I'm always asking them "what are you trying to tell me?" I feel I can answer questions that students have about black-white relationships more adequately than before the conference.

An administrator put it this way:

> --I'm not in the classroom but it has given me a much greater commitment to aiding the cause of human understanding between the races. I see it now as a more urgent, personal matter and something that I cannot postpone any longer. ...this year I have done more than talk about recruiting Negro teachers -- I'm doing it.

A parent participant saw the impact on the school through his children:

> --as a parent, it has had a most significant effect on my children. They are happier, have much more trust in their teachers and are developing a greater sense of wanting to learn rather than "having to" learn.

3. <u>Relationships with co-workers and supervisors</u>: The response here was uneven. About one-half of the participants felt their relationships had improved significantly while the remainder felt relations had deteriorated. It seems clear that the response varied from school to school. For example, one participant reported that:

> --the general atmosphere is warmer -- less competitive -- less pressure. There's a definite improvement in my relationship with the principal. We are both more positive in our approach and more receptive to suggestion.

While another wrote:

> --I wonder if the program hasn't done more harm than good. There are definite cleavages, mistrust and suspicion.

The split, for the most part, developed between those who attended the program and those who did not. The following responses are illustrative:

> --I don't feel as 'accepted' by others on the staff as I was before I went away. Those who are against the seminars consider me on the "other side." Those of us who went away have become closer.

--Those who did not attend showed a somewhat negative reaction to our relationship with others of the group. They felt somewhat left out, they said.

4. Perceptions of students: Almost without exception, participants saw a positive change in the way they viewed their students and in some cases were able to detect a change in their students' view of them.

--I view them more as individuals rather than as a group.

--I see more objectively -- rather than subjectively. I am less wanting to label, classify, judge -- more willing to help than resist, etc. instead of giving up on them and saying 'forget it.'

--I benefited from the description in our group of how a black child feels in a very white situation. I think I have a slightly better view now of this feeling.

--a number of parents remarked to me at the end of the first week after the seminar that their children had remarked "Gee Mrs. _____ really likes me."

5. Effect on nonparticipants: The nonparticipants fell into three categories -- some were curious about the program; some felt "left out", and some were openly hostile to the program and the participants. The response of the nonparticipants was conditioned by:

a. the inability of the participants to adequately explain what happened

b. the rumor mill which told of wild episodes during the training

c. the close relationships which developed among those who attended and

d. the wholesale attack on the program by some personnel and a segment of the larger community.

6. Should the program be mandatory? More than 70 percent of the participants felt the program should not be mandatory. Those who believed that participation should be mandatory saw the purpose of the program as so vital that all school personnel should be required to attend.

7. Needed improvements in the program: The most frequently mentioned changes suggested by participants were a better orientation program, follow-up sessions and an increased focus on the problems of re-entry.

About 30 percent of the participants made specific reference to the inadequacy of the orientation prior to the weekend. They felt they had little knowledge of the program's format, especially the techniques to be employed. They wanted both written materials on sensitivity training and group discussions with the trainers.

--there should be more work done on the preliminary orientation of the program. During the orientation session, it could be explained that this type of program is not entirely new or strange but it has been done and is being done in other places. Although the procedures may vary, at least the persons who might be involved would get an overview of the program.

Almost as many participants also expressed a desire for follow-up sessions. These sessions would deal with both re-entry problems and discussions of how learnings were applied.

> --possibly, the follow-up might have been a week earlier ...to have a general discussion about problems that are now bothering us in our attempts to live up to our high hopes.

A number of participants felt that the problems of re-entry were not adequately handled. They experienced great difficulty in making the transition from the laboratory world to their home and work environment. Some felt that the whole last day should be devoted to this area.

> --the last day at least should be devoted to helping participants learn how to enter reality. Explaining how others may react to him and what to do.

8. Residential setting: Without exception, participants felt that holding the program in residence at a site removed from Lawrence Township was beneficial and for most, indispensable. The following response is typical:

> --I feel that the residency aspect of the program is indispensable. I don't see how the program could be effective without it. The discussions need to be approached with as few distractions as possible, and the residency is what makes this possible.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Following the second of the four seminars the program became a community-wide public issue. The effects spilled over into the adjacent communities of Princeton and Trenton, both of which were considering similar programs.

There had been little advance publicity about the program. Thus, when rumors about the program began circulating and splits developed among the faculty, the larger community became involved. The attack on the seminars came primarily from people outside the school system, although a sizable number of non-participants within the system formed part of the opposition.

Much of the debate took place in the local newspapers. Two full-page features, several news stories and about 20 letters to the editor were generated.

Two public board meetings -- the first attended by about 400 people and a second which drew nearly 650 residents -- were devoted to the program. The seminars were also discussed at other board meetings and were cited in a dispute involving the resignation of the high school principal.

The nature of the opposition was varied and, therefore, not easy either to summarize or to explain.

Within the school system, opposition centered:

--in the junior and senior schools. There is no adequate explanation for this phenomenon except that several participants in the first seminar who returned dissatisfied with the training were from these schools and presumably discussed it with their colleagues.

--on attendance, which was voluntary, but some felt that they were being intimidated into participating either by their colleagues or by the training staff.

Outside the system, the attack focused on:

--the evils of sensitivity training in general. There were some standard right-wing attacks on the training as "brainwashing," "a communist tool" and "Hitler-inspired."

--the credentials of the trainers. As one of the letters to the editor of a local paper stated: "The persons assigned to conduct the training sessions are not seriously qualified to do so. They possess no professional credentials as educators, social psychiatrists or psychologists. Yet, they have been given authority to administer a curious and highly experimental exercise in group therapy, which involves all those fields of special competence."*

--the materials distributed to the participants. Specifically, the article, "The Student as Nigger" which contains what to some was "offensive" language and yet is an extremely useful piece on the student in American education. The article was removed after a board meeting when it was used by opponents to attack the training program. Removal of the article had no effect on the training.

In spite of the opposition, an overwhelming majority (at least 95%) of the participants remained firm in their support of the training. The school board and top administrators -- many of whom had been participants -- also continued to back the seminars.

*Trenton Times, April 29, 1969

An adequate assessment of the impact of the training on the community has yet to be done. Some say there was a total polarization of the school system and the community at the end of the school year. Others say the division has been overemphasized due to the widespread publicity. Still others say the reaction has been salutary for both the school system and the community. Black parents and teachers, for example, saw much of the opposition to the training as racist in nature and are now better able to deal with their role in the school system.

It does seem clear that the racial problems, both within the schools and in the township, surfaced as a result of the seminars. While some see this as creating divisiveness, exploding the myth that "there is no race problem in Lawrence" can only be judged useful.

LEARNINGS: IMPLICATIONS FOR LABORATORY TRAINING IN SCHOOL SYSTEMS

1. Community education: There is no doubt that the effectiveness of this program was severely limited by the widespread opposition to the program in the community. Although some opposition will always be there -- especially from the right-wing -- support for the program can be built by an effective "selling job." Prior to the program, a series of community meetings must be planned. These meetings should include a clear explanation

of the program and, where appropriate, demonstrations of the training methodology. A brief, written explanation of laboratory training should also be distributed. The public also needs to understand the goals of the program and its ultimate value to the school system. Finally, the board and the administration should outline the background of the training firm and why they were selected for the contract.

2. Orientation: A similar imperative applies to the potential participants. Each person should be given some literature describing laboratory training as well as an outline of the goals and format of their program.* The written material needs to be supplemented by meetings to further describe the program and training methodology. The latter is especially important since laboratory training will be a totally new learning experience for most people. Attendance should, of course, be voluntary. But more important, no one should be tricked into coming or participate under false pretenses.

*One possible piece is "Description of a Typical Residential Laboratory" in Schein and Bennis, op. Cit., pp. 10-27.

3. Re-entry: The standard laboratory training residential program requires that at least one session at the conclusion of the program be devoted to problems of re-entry into the home and work environment. The sensitive nature of racism training makes this type of session mandatory.

   The session should deal with:

   a. a summary of new learnings

   b. how and where they may be applied and

   c. problems which may be encountered in applying the learnings.

   In this program, participants often found that non-participants in the school or community had great difficulty in accepting their mode of behavior. Or, more specifically, they raised this question: How do you respond when you hear or see a clearly racist attitude or behavior?*

4. Follow-up: In this program, insufficient funds prevented an extensive follow-up to the weekend. There was one brief meeting several weeks after the seminar. However, about half of the session was devoted to completion of the evaluation form.

*A somewhat sarcastic but useful response is Preston Wilcox, "Retooling for the White Liberal." (mimeo)

The reactions of the participants coupled with the observations of the training staff clearly indicate the need for at least several full days of follow-up training.

Participants need an opportunity to test out their learnings and then return to a laboratory for discussion and feedback. This was especially true in this program where the total focus of the effort was extremely sensitive and resulted in considerable controversy. The re-entry and follow-up sessions are obviously intimately related and they need to be designed to connect for the benefit of the participants and the school system.

5. Trainers: The question of credentials is extremely important in American education. The holding of an academic degree is somehow a presumption of effective performance. The difficulties involved in implementing "new careers" projects which utilize paraprofessionals as classroom aides is instructive. This craft union mentality results in the belief that an effective job can only be done by people with the "right" degrees and "appropriate" credentials. While participants never questioned the credentials

of the trainers, non participants in the school system and community residents raised the issue repeatedly. Since CATI is community and not university based and none of the trainers have NTL or other similar affiliations (although the staff was trained by an NTL Associate) this became a point of attack for opponents. Additionally, several of the staff, including the lead trainer, did not hold college degrees. The Training Institute and the school administration resisted all efforts to bend on this issue. They maintained that the training should be judged on the basis of its results and not the degrees of the trainers. However, trainers embarking on school system training should be prepared for opposition of this kind.*

EPILOGUE

One of the objections most often heard in the mass meetings following the first two sessions was that the public was not adequately informed. In order to gain greater involvement by a larger number of residents, the Board of Education initiated an open Citizens' Advisory Group on Human Relations to be

*We believe that this is a phony issue and is used by opponents of the training as a hook on which to base their attack. They are simply looking for an issue. In this case, there may have been some racism involved since the lead trainer was Black and training focused on racism.

attended by anyone interested. On the first night in July, over 300 residents joined the committee. After a basic presentation by Dr. Daniel Dodson of New York University, small groups were formed to discuss questions concerning Black-White Relations in the township. Since the questions were not covered completely during the first evening, residents agreed to continue discussions in private homes, classrooms, or convenient meeting places. Most groups met privately at least once and some as often as four times. All indications show that widely differing viewpoints were discussed in every group. In August, representatives of the discussion groups came together to draft recommendations to the Board of Education. It was presented to the Board on September 9.

Although it was general, the tone and recommendations were clear. The most important factor was that the agreement reached was that more dialogues were needed. A continuation of the committee was recommended under auspices other than the Board of Education. It was also recommended that the committee be continued on a broadly representative basis and that all factions be included.

It appears that the community has gone through a convulsive period of growth and that a new maturity has taken place. The cries of "it couldn't happen here" are no longer heard. Residents are concerned and willing to participate in human relations dialogues in any way they can. The backlog

of good relations between the White and Black communities has reasserted itself in a new, more mutually independent fashion. Service clubs, civic associations and independent citizens are continuing financial and community cooperative ventures with a greater awareness of differences than ever before. As the political speeches are heard throughout the township, better relations between Blacks and Whites keynotes each platform. Although sensitivity did appear to catalyze the community, it did help it to grow.

CONCLUSION

The Kerner Commission report identified racism as a pervasive and debilitating force in our society. In this project, a small suburban school district, in conjunction with a community-based training institute, undertook an experimental program to deal with the issue.

The results have important implications for both trainers and educators, as well as for others involved in social change. It is clear, that in spite of the obstacles encountered, change is possible -- the response of the participants supports this. However, it is also clear that laboratory training in schools is approaching sex education, community control and busing as a major controversial issue. Therefore, planners must be prepared not only to design a comprehensive effort but also to negotiate with a variety of opponents.

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New Jersey Community Action Training Institute
P.O. Box 4078
2465 So. Broad Street
Trenton, N.J. 08610